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AUTHOR	Crossland, Ron
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ABSTRACT

The Running Start program was created by the 1990 Washington State Legislature to expand educational options for public school students. Running Start allows eleventh and twelfth grade high school students to take college-level courses, tuition-free, at the 32 community and technical colleges in Washington. This annual progress report for 1996-97 provides information about the program and its outcomes, as well as possible improvements. It begins with a program summary and background information, and clarifies the elements and criteria of Running Start. Qualifying high school students attend technical and community colleges to receive simultaneous credit for both high school and college courses, saving money for both taxpayers and students' families. Student characteristics for fall 1997 show that the majority of participants were white females, with a fair representation of ethnic minorities. The report provides student success and transfer outcome measures. Follow-up research on students who transferred to the University of Washington indicates that the college grade point averages and graduation rates of Running Start students are slightly higher than the average of entering freshmen. A discussion of program improvements and related issues, and enrollment reports by college for the 1996-97 year and fall quarter 1997 conclude the report. Appendices include statistics on Running Start students and graduation rates. (YKH)

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RUNNING START

1996-97

Annual Progress Report

State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

January 1998

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For Additional Information Contact:
Dr. Ron Crossland
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
319 7th Avenue
P O Box 42495
Olympia WA 98504-2495
(360) 753-3674
rcrossland@sbctc.ctc.edu

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Running Start

A progress report from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

January 1998

Background

The Running Start program was created by the 1990 Legislature to expand educational options for public school students. **Running Start allows 11th and 12th grade high school students to take college-level courses, tuition-free, at the 32 community and technical colleges.** Students earn both high school and college credits, with five college quarter credits equal to one high school credit.

The Legislature initiated Running Start with a two-year pilot program from 1990-92. Statewide operation began in 1992-93. In the first full year of statewide operation, about 3,508 high school students enrolled full- or part-time at the community and technical colleges. That number increased to 10,250 for the 1996-97 year. Running Start is also available through several of the state's four-year universities.

Taxpayers saved about $18 million through the Running Start program last year, and the students who participated saved $9 million in college tuition costs.

Running Start students represent about 5 percent of Washington's public high school students. While students attend the colleges free of tuition charges, they must provide their own transportation, books, and supplies.

The Running Start Option

More than 10,000 high school students around Washington state participated in Running Start in 1996-97. By allowing them to earn high school and college credits simultaneously, Running Start has reduced the amount of time they have to spend in school and has held down college costs for students and their families.

To participate in Running Start at most colleges, students must pass a standardized test to determine whether they have the skills needed to succeed at college.

To preserve the college environment for adults while accommodating the younger students, colleges balance the number of Running Start students and adults who may take any one class. Also, colleges have worked to ensure that their registration procedures do not result in Running Start students displacing adults at community and technical colleges.

Running Start Enrollments
Academic Year 1996-97

College	Headcount
Bates*	92
Bellevue	524
Bellingham	93
Big Bend	176
Centralia	181
Clark	515
Clover Park*	97
Columbia Basin	397
Edmonds	419
Everett	376
Grays Harbor	108
Green River	498
Highline	407
Lake Washington*	21
Lower Columbia	244
North Seattle	181
Olympic	228
Peninsula	328
Pierce	506
Renton	107
Seattle Central	370
Shoreline	267
Skagit Valley	676
South Puget Sound	511
South Seattle	216
Spokane	245
Spokane Falls	530
Tacoma	427
Walla Walla	315
Wenatchee Valley	253
Whatcom	635
Yakima Valley	307
Total	**10,250**

** Bates, Clover Park, and Lake Washington also offer alternative programs for high school students in addition to Running Start.*

For more information:
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges,
Bruce Botka, 360-753-3656
Ron Crossland, 360-753-3674

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In fact, the enrollment of new Running Start students has enabled colleges to add sections of existing classes, expanding enrollment opportunities for adults as well as Running Start participants.

Funding for Running Start is designed to compensate colleges for the cost of educating K-12 students. Colleges are reimbursed about $79 per credit for academic programs and $95 per credit for vocational programs by K-12 districts whose students participate in Running Start. The K-12 districts retain 7 percent of those funds for administrative overhead and student counseling.

By allowing students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously, Running Start has reduced the amount of time they have to spend in school and has held down college costs for students and their families.

Who participates in Running Start?

Research by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) indicates that **about 70 percent of Running Start students take 10 or more credits per quarter; 59 percent are female; 14.4 percent are students of color; 41 percent work part-time while attending college; and 1.2 percent are disabled.**

The academic performance of Running Start students — and the support for the program among students and parents — has been very positive. The average grade point of Running Start students is 2.80, about the same as the average of regular community and technical college students.

Are students successful after transferring to the universities?

The University of Washington (UW) graduation follow-up study on the original 88 Running Start transfer students who entered in fall 1993 reports that Running Start students graduated with a 3.42 GPA as compared to 3.14 for students who began their college education at the UW. Running Start students also graduated at a higher rate in four years, 41 percent as compared to 31 percent.

The UW reports that the 479 Running Start students who transferred to the University during fall 1996 have an average grade point of 3.04 and are averaging 14 credits per quarter. In fall 1997, 504 students entered and 44 had achieved their two-year degree. And **89 percent of all Running Start students surveyed in 1992 said they would participate again.**

Ongoing issues in Running Start

The Running Start program represents a major departure from traditional educational practices, and has raised the visibility of several issues related to educational funding and students' movement between the K-12 and college systems.

- One of the most significant financial impacts is the savings that result from students earning college and high school credits at the same time. Because K-12 basic education funds are used for Running Start (the K-12 funds "follow the student" to his or her college), high school students are able to attend college tuition-free. **Last year, the program saved students and their families $9.2 million in college tuition costs. In addition, taxpayers pay only one time to support Running Start students in both the high school and college systems. This "two-for-one" aspect of Running Start saved taxpayers about $18.3 million in 1996-97.**

- K-12 administrators have expressed concerns that the transfer of students and the shift of funds to the colleges — reflecting the popularity of Running Start — have made it more difficult for some high schools to maintain comprehensive programs, especially in college preparatory courses.

- The community and technical college system continues to support a request to the Legislature to improve funding for Running Start. This additional funding would be used to address the financial impact in certain K-12 districts where movement of students has caused clearly-identified financial problems. Of particular importance are counseling programs, where the impact of advising Running Start students has caused increased workloads, and for high schools where the Advanced Placement classes have experienced declining enrollments or cutbacks.

Running Start is only one of the programs which articulate high schools and the two-year colleges. In a 1996 survey by the SBCTC, other programs include advanced placement, college in the high school, the international baccalaureate diploma, tech-prep, as well as many other services implemented at the local level. Further information about the survey is available at the SBCTC.

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THE RUNNING START PROGRAM
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
1996-97

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RUNNING START
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
1996-97

SUMMARY

The Running Start Program, in 1996-97, continued its history as a successful program. Growth continued to be strong, although at a declining rate from previous years. In 1996-97, over 10,200 students enrolled for a total of 5,826 FTEs. This was a growth of about 18 percent from the previous year. Headcount enrollments for Fall 1997, the current year, are 8785 with FTEs of 6599. The high schools of the state continue to provide excellent preparation for students who are entering the Running Start program at the community or technical colleges and the universities that offer the program.

BACKGROUND

The 1990 Legislature created the Running Start program as a part of the "Learning by Choice" law, which was designed to expand educational options for public high school students. The Running Start portion of the law allows qualified eleventh and twelfth grade students to take college level courses at the 32 community and technical colleges. Running Start students earn both high school and college credits for completing courses at the college level. The 1994 legislature expanded the program to include Eastern, Central and Washington State universities. The intention of the legislature was to provide Running Start program access in the local communities served by these universities and where no two-year colleges were available to directly serve students.

To initiate the program in 1990 the Legislature authorized a two-year pilot program. Five community colleges were selected to participate during the 1990-92 academic year (Everett, Pierce, Skagit Valley, South Puget Sound and Walla Walla community colleges). The pilot program involved 37 high schools within the college service areas. Program enrollments for the first year were 358 students.

The program began statewide in 1992-93 when about 3,350 students enrolled at the community and technical colleges. For 1996-97, about 10,200 headcount students enrolled.

RUNNING START PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Eleventh and twelfth grade students, as defined by the high school and who are qualified for admission, may attend community and technical colleges and three universities free of tuition. However, they must provide their own transportation, books and consumable materials.

For the 1996-97 academic year, colleges were reimbursed at statewide uniform rates by the K-12 districts whose students participate in Running Start. Colleges received about $79 per credit for academic programs and $94 per credit for vocational programs. K-12 Districts retain seven percent of the funds for counseling and overhead. During the pilot program years, reimbursement rates varied by school district according to the rate of reimbursement from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

By allowing students to obtain high school and college credit simultaneously, Running Start reduces the amount of time students spend in school and reduces college costs for students and their families. Dual credit also allows the state to save up to two full years of state funding for students enrolled. In 1996-97, the total saving from the Running Start Program is estimated at $27.5 million dollars to the taxpayers and parents in the state. Considering 5,827 FTE students, the program saved the State $18.3 million because of the dual credit that students earn for participating in the program. Parents and students also saved approximately $9.2 million in tuition.

Flexibility in scheduling allows Running Start students to meet other commitments for education, jobs, or family responsibilities. For fall 1997, forty percent of the students worked part time and one percent worked full time.

Running Start presents a challenging option for qualified students who may perform better in a college setting than in a traditional high school.

Students continue to report that taking classes with regular college students and adults offers a new and challenging experience to learning.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RUNNING START STUDENTS -- FALL 1997

Running Start students for fall 1997, as a group, are very similar to previous years in demographic characteristics.

- Fifty-nine percent of the students were female.
- Over fourteen percent were students of color.
- The average credit load taken by the students was 10-11 credits per quarter. Seventy-two percent took ten or more credits during fall 1996, but many students take one course per quarter with the balance of classes taken in high school.
- One percent were students with disabilities.
- Forty-one percent of the students worked part time, and over one percent worked full time.
- Approximately seventy-eight percent of the students were enrolled in academic courses, and twenty-two percent in vocational or professional-technical programs.

STUDENT SUCCESS AND TRANSFER OUTCOME MEASURES

- The average grade point average of Running Start students in 1996-97 was approximately 2.7. This is about the same, but slightly above the average entering freshman grade point average.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON FOLLOW-UP RESEARCH

The University of Washington reports the following information concerning Running Start students who have transferred to the university.

Fall Quarter, 1997, Running Start Admissions.

- For fall quarter 1997, 504 Running Start students were admitted. Two hundred-twenty eight were female (55 percent).
- Program students achieved a grade point slightly higher but about the same as entering freshmen at the U of W.
- The students also took about the same credit load as regular freshmen.
- 163 (32 percent) of the entering UW transfers in the Running Start program were students of color.

Bachelors Degree Graduation Rates for Running Start Students.

- In fall quarter 1993, 88 Running Start students entered the university. Of these entering students, 41% (36 students) graduated in four years. This graduation rate compares favorably to the 31% of regular students who entered and completed their bachelor's degree at the same time.

- Grade point averages also compare favorably. Running Start students graduated with a GPA of 3.42 as compared to the regular entering freshman students graduating GPA of 3.14.

Other Comments.

Considering research, surveys and quarterly meetings of community and technical colleges involved in Running Start, the following information is provided.

- The program is well received by students and parents, as originally found in the 1992 research study.

- Counseling time and costs are substantially more than cost for regular students and the funding formula does not recognize the extra workload.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS AND RELATED ISSUES

High schools that are the most heavily impacted by loss of students who are choosing Running Start, report that local high school advanced placement programs are being diminished by the lower number of students participating. This results in fewer options for students who decide to stay full-time at the high school. Some high schools report that they are considering discontinuing their advanced placement programs because of the high per student cost of offering the program to the students who chose to remain.

In addition, the high cost and time spent in counseling Running Start students is not being addressed by the overhead costs retained by the school districts. The dual enrollment nature of Running Start requires intensive counseling by high school and college staff to assure testing, placement and the selection of courses that will meet high school diploma and college degree requirements at the same time.

These unintended consequences limit full endorsement of the program by the K-12 system. In order to maintain comprehensive high school programs, additional resources are needed. The request for additional program funds to address the above deficiencies is strongly supported by the high school and community and technical college systems.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary, Running Start continues to be an excellent program option for qualified high school juniors and seniors. Parents and students strongly support the program because it expands their educational choices while reducing the time required to complete their education and tuition costs. Many students report that the program offers an additional educational challenge by allowing them to participate in the same classes and learning atmosphere as regular college and adult students. The State benefits from the savings in state aid because of the dual credit awarded to students. Colleges and the University of Washington report that Running Start student performance is at least equal to the performance of other entering-level freshmen as measured by grade point averages. The program would be improved if additional funding was made available to offset the additional counseling demands and the loss of comprehensive programs at the high schools impacted by the program.

RUNNING START ENROLLMENTS
Fiscal Year 1996-97

College	Headcount	FTEs
010 Peninsula	328	247.97
020 Grays Harbor	108	68.02
030 Olympic	228	162.85
040 Skagit Valley	676	320.25
050 Everett	376	252.58
060 District		
Seattle Central	370	182.54
Seattle North	181	97.56
Seattle South	216	109.54
Seattle Voc Institute		
070 Shoreline	267	150.77
080 Bellevue	524	326.49
090 Highline	407	246.16
100 Green River	498	272.67
110 Pierce	506	262.44
120 Centralia	181	128.98
130 Lower Columbia	244	136.94
140 Clark	515	241.63
150 Wenatchee Valley	253	146.73
160 Yakima Valley	307	167.35
170 District		
Spokane	245	147.78
Spokane Falls	530	311.97
180 Big Bend	176	117.50
190 Columbia Basin	397	274.71
200 Walla Walla	315	139.28
210 Whatcom	635	288.40
220 Tacoma	427	245.90
230 Edmonds	419	228.57
240 So Puget Sound	511	215.34
250 Bellingham	93	74.93
260 Lake Washington	21	4.85
270 Renton	107	50.48
280 Bates	92	107.81
290 Clover Park	97	97.73
TOTAL	10,250	5,826.72

Source: SBCTC MIS Report SR3105.

RUNNING START ENROLLMENTS
Fall Quarter 1997

College	Headcount	FTEs
010 Peninsula	273	237.87
020 Grays Harbor	112	88.11
030 Olympic	239	207.31
040 Skagit Valley	531	357.56
050 Everett	399	308.13
060 District		
Seattle Central	261	202.79
Seattle North	136	92.70
Seattle South	186	140.25
Seattle Voc Institute		
070 Shoreline	250	182.52
080 Bellevue	382	301.72
090 Highline	319	250.39
100 Green River	495	376.56
110 Pierce	443	314.14
120 Centralia	177	151.01
130 Lower Columbia	235	162.10
140 Clark	482	294.54
150 Wenatchee Valley	241	179.39
160 Yakima Valley	291	206.66
170 District		
Spokane	181	151.57
Spokane Falls	444	358.82
180 Big Bend	114	88.95
190 Columbia Basin	389	305.21
200 Walla Walla	199	120.80
210 Whatcom	558	350.23
220 Tacoma	385	288.48
230 Edmonds	386	287.00
240 So Puget Sound	422	260.84
250 Bellingham	62	64.06
260 Lake Washington	10	6.07
270 Renton	38	34.42
280 Bates	99	164.29
290 Clover Park	46	65.35
TOTAL	8,785	6,599.84

Source: SBCTC MIS Report SR3105.

University of Washington
Running Start Students
Entering Autumn 1996

Number of Students		479	
Gender			
	Male	227	47.4%
	Female	252	52.6%
College Class			
	Freshman	457	95.4%
	Sophomore	11	2.3%
	Junior	11	2.3%
Ethnic Distribution			
	African-American	9	1.9%
	Asian-American	111	23.2%
	Hispanic	15	3.1%
	Native American	7	1.5%
	White	300	62.6%
	Other	37	7.7%
High School GPA			
	Mean	3.64	
	Range	2.48 - 4.00	
SAT Verbal			
	Mean	581	
	Range	230 - 800	
SAT Math			
	Mean	599	
	Range	260 - 800	
SAT Total			
	Mean	1181	
	Range	620 - 1570	

University of Washington
Running Start Students
Entering Autumn 1996

ACT Score

Mean	25
Range	5 - 35

Entering Transfer Credits

Mean	35
Range	1.5 - 90
AA Degrees	40

Largest Feeder High Schools

1.	Sehome	15
2.	Inglemoor	13
3.	Mountlake Terr.	11
4.	Mount Rainier (tie)	10
	Issaquah (tie)	10
	Shorewood (tie)	10
7.	Kentridge	9

Largest Feeder Community Colleges

1.	Bellevue	60
2.	Shoreline	35
3.	Edmonds	28
4.	Green River	26
5.	Clark (tie)	21
	Highline (tie)	21
7.	Everett	20

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University of Washington
Running Start Students
Entering Autumn 1996

UW Performance

GPA	Autumn 1996	Winter 1997	Spring 1997
Running Start	3.04	3.05	3.04
Freshmen from HS	3.01	3.05	3.04
CC Transfer	3.02	3.05	3.08
Credits Earned			
Running Start	13.8	13.6	13.6
All Freshmen	13.9	14.0	13.8
CC Transfer	11.4	11.6	11.6

Continuation Rate

88.9% (426/479 registered Autumn 1997 for 14.7 average credit load)

University of Washington
Running Start Students
Entering Autumn 1996

UW Performance

GPA	Autumn 1996	Winter 1997	Spring 1997
Running Start	3.04	3.05	3.04
Freshmen from HS	3.01	3.05	3.04
CC Transfer	3.02	3.05	3.08
Credits Earned			
Running Start	13.8	13.6	13.6
All Freshmen	13.9	14.0	13.8
CC Transfer	11.4	11.6	11.6

Continuation Rate

88.9% (426/479 registered Autumn 1997 for 14.7 average credit load)

University of Washington
Running Start Students
Entering Autumn 1993

Number of Students	88
Average Transfer Credits	24.0
Average 10th Day Credits per Quarter	14.1
Average Completed Credits per Quarter	12.8
Average Quarters Attended	10.2
Average Quarterly GPA Earned	3.11
% Graduated (through Spring 1997)	40.91% (36 of 88)
% Attrited (Last Enrollment < Autumn 1996)	23.86% (21 or 88)
Still Attending (Last Enrollment > Summer 1996)	35.23% (31 of 88)
GPA of Graduates	3.42
Average UW Credits Earned by Graduates	166.3
Average Total Credits Earned by Graduates	200.5
Average GEI of Graduates*	95.1

* GEI computed only for single-degree, single-major students.